

REMARKS

This application has been carefully studied and amended in view of the Office Action dated June 6, 2008. Reconsideration of that action is requested in view of the following.

Applicants confirm the election of Group I. Non-elected Claim 10 is being maintained in the application pending the filing of a divisional application. Claim 9 has been canceled. Claims 11-14 have been added which are included with Group I, since these claims are dependent on the claims of Group I.

The claims have been carefully reviewed and amended in view of the rejection of Claims 5 and 7-9 under 35 USC 112. Specifically, Claim 5 has been amended to make clear that the claim is directed to the flange of Claim 1 in combination with a hollow body, namely a fuel tank. Claims 7 and 8 have been amended in their preamble to refer to the "combination" of Claim 5. Claim 2 has also been amended to recite the ring as being part of the claimed combination. Newly added Claims 11-14 are also "combination" claims. Of these newly added claims, claims 12 and 14 correspond to former Claim 9 which has now been canceled.

It is respectfully submitted that parent Claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over Kleppner in view Stangier. Parent Claim 1 relates to a flange which would be used for mounting accessories on a thermalplastic hollow body and which is also capable of closing off in a sealed manner and opening in the wall of the body. A significant feature of Claim 1 is that the flange has a thread on its periphery.

As recognized by Examiner Castellano the Kleppner patent does not disclose a thread on the periphery of the flange. As a result, Stangier is relied upon for that feature. It is respectfully submitted, however, that Stangier does not disclose such feature. What Stangier does disclose, as shown in Figure 6, is a flange 316 which is also referred to as a cover. Accordingly, flange or cover 316 would correspond to the flange claimed in parent Claim 1. However, as defined in Claim 1 the member which would close off the opening in the wall of the hollow body and which could provide support for mounting accessories to the hollow body is the same member that has a thread on its periphery. In contrast, with Stangier there is no thread on cover or flange 316.

Rather, what is shown in Stangier is an intermediate ring 358 located between the cap nut 356 and wall 310 of the fuel tank. It is this ring 358 which would be engaged with the cap nut, but not with the flange or cover. The ring 358 is made of a very rigid material and induces weaknesses into the impact behavior of the tank, owing to the local rigidification that it causes in the wall of the tank near the opening.

It is submitted that even if Kleppner and Stangier were combined, the result would be to locate a ring between the flange and a cap nut which would lack the structure defined in parent Claim 1 of the flange itself being threaded on its periphery.

Note is also made of the various dependent claims which define features of the flange in combination with the hollow body and make clear that the same member which functions to seal the opening in the hollow body and which can support the accessories is the member having a threaded periphery.

In view of the above remarks and amendments it is respectfully requested that this application should be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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